

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 COME-00 MCT-01  
SNM-05 DEAE-00 /084 W  
-----074748 111358Z /20

P R 102210Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6834  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
USSOUTHCOM  
AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA POUCH  
/AMCONSUL CALI POUCH  
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ECON, PINS, SNAR, CO  
SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY JULIO CESAR TURBAY, AFTER HIS VICTORY IN THE CONTEST OF THE LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, IS MOVING TO TAKE FULL CONTROL OF THE PARTY. HIS DEFEATED OPPONENT CARLOS LLERAS, ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY FUTURE ELECTIONS. THE SUPREME COURT WILL DETERMINE SHORTLY WHETHER TO DECIDE THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF LEGISLATION PROVIDING FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY. INFLATION CONTINUES TO MODERATE. PUBLIC ORDER WAS MARRED BY VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN CALI AND BY ASSAULTS AND KILLINGS BY FARC GUERRILLAS. THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS DEPARTMENT IS PREPARING AN OFFICIAL NOTICE THAT THE AIR FORCE WILL USE WEAPONS AGAINST AIRPLANES MAKING UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY INTO COLOMBIAN AIR SPACE; THIS POLICY IS AIMED AT AIRCRAFT USED IN NARCOTICS SMUGGLING. END SUMMARY.

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2. TURBAY CONSOLIDATES HIS VICTORY. ALMOST TWO WEEKS AFTER THE FEBRUARY 26 ELECTION, THE AGONIZINGLY SLOW BALLOT COUNTING PROCESS STILL HAS NOT YIELDED THE FINAL OFFICIAL RESULTS. POLITICIANS, HOWEVER, HAVE ACCEPTED THE NEARLY COMPLETE UNOFFICIAL TALLY. JULIO CESAR TURBAY, THE LIBERAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, HAS TAKEN FULL CONTROL OF THE PARTY AND HAS CALLED A CONVENTION OF NEWLY ELECTED LIBERAL CONGRESSMEN AND EX-

PRESIDENTS FOR MARCH 17. THE CONVENTION WILL OFFICIALLY PROCLAIM TURBAY AS CANDIDATE, DEVELOP A PARTY PLATFORM, AND CONSTITUTE A PARTY DIRECTORATE, WHICH TURBAY HAS SAID WILL BE A THREE-MAN BODY REPRESENTING ALL OF THE PARTY'S FACTIONS. THE LIBERAL PARTY HAS HAD NO SUCH CENTRAL DIRECTIVE DURING THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF THE INABILITY OF LIBERAL FACTIONS TO AGREE ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF SUCH A BODY. THE AUTHORITY CONFERRED ON TURBAY BY HIS OVERWHELMING ELECTORAL VICTORY WILL ELIMINATE MOST OF THE ARGUMENT THIS TIME. THE OFFICIAL ANAPO, ASSOCIATED WITH THE DECEASED GENERAL ROJAS AND NOW LED BY HIS DAUGHTER, MARIA EUGENIA, WILL HOLD ITS CONVENTION ON MARCH 11. ALTHOUGH ANAPO SPLINTER GROUPS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH MOSCOW- AND PEKING-ORIENTED LEFTIST PARTIES, THE MAINSTREAM TOOK NO POSITION ON FEBRUARY 26 AND IS EXPECTED AT ITS CONVENTION TO ANNOUNCE ITS SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE BELISARIO BETANCUR. CONSERVATIVES ARE HOPEFUL THAT THIS SUPPORT MAY ATTRACT AS MANY AS TWO MILLION ADDITIONAL VOTES TO THEIR CANDIDATE, BUT THEIR EXPECTATIONS ARE ALMOST CERTAINLY OVER OPTIMISTIC.

3. LLERAS TO WITHDRAW FROM ACTIVE POLITICS. FORMER PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS, CRITICIZING THE LOPEZ GOVERNMENT FOR ITS ALLEGED PARTIALITY TOWARDS TURBAY IN HIS FEBRUARY 26 VICTORY OVER LLERAS, ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN ANY FUTURE ELECTIONS. THE ERSTWHILE CANDIDATE RENOUNCED HIS POSITION AS HEAD OF A LIBERAL PARTY FACTION, BUT SAID THAT HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL CONTINUE HIS COMMENTARIES IN HIS WEEKLY MAGAZINE. LLERAS PROMPTED A SERIES OF CRITICAL EXCHANGES WITH THE LEADING LIBERAL NEWSPAPER EL TIEMPO WHEN HE ATTACKED THE DAILY FOR ITS INEFFECTIVE SUPPORT OF HIS CANDIDACY, AND FOR PUBLISHING LARGE AMOUNTS OF PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISING FOR TURBAY.

4. SUPREME COURT TO CONSIDER CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY BILL. THE SUPREME COURT, FOLLOWING A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, WILL DECIDE WHETHER IT IS COMPETENT TO RULE ON THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ACT PROVIDING FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY (BOGOTA 2090). LIBERAL POLITICIANS, MEANWHILE, HAVE BEGUN MANEUVERING FOR POSITIONS AS ASSEMBLY DELEGATES. THE MAKE-UP OF THE LIBERAL DELEGATION WILL BE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TURBAY IN HIS POSITION AS DE FACTO HEAD OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

5. INFLATION. THE FEBRUARY CONSUMER PRICE INDEX INCREASED BY 1.4 PERCENT FOR WORKERS AND 1.7 PERCENT FOR EMPLOYEES. THESE PRICE MOVEMENTS SEASONALLY ADJUST TO ANNUAL RATES THROUGH THE END OF FEBRUARY OF 14 AND 15 PERCENT. IF INFLATION CAN BE HELD TO THESE RATES FOR SEVERAL MORE MONTHS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BEGIN A MORE RAPID RELAXATION OF THE MONETARY CONTROLS,

MAKING THE OUTLOOK FOR GROWTH WITH LOWER INFLATION RATES BETTER THAN ANY TIME SINCE LOPEZ TOOK OFFICE. THIS WEEK, WHEN THE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE PRICE OF MILK WAS RAISED, IT WAS MET WITH COMPLAINTS BUT NO DISTURBANCES.

6. PUBLIC ORDER. PRESIDENT LOPEZ ANNOUNCED THAT THE STATE OF SIEGE WILL NOT BE LIFTED DURING THE REMAINDER OF HIS ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH PROMPTED ITS IMPLEMENTATION STILL EXIST. HE ADDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT "WILL BE RELENTLESS" IN FIGHTING KIDNAPPERS AND DRUG TRAFFICKERS. IN CALI, SEVERAL DAYS OF VIOLENT STREET DEMONSTRATIONS LEFT TWO STUDENTS DEAD AND SEVERAL POLICE AGENTS AND STUDENTS INJURED. SECURITY OFFICIALS MAY HAVE AVOIDED WORSE VIOLENCE WHEN THEY SEIZED BOXES OF FRAGMENTATION BOMBS, PISTOLS AND A LARGE QUANTITY OF AMMUNITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH TWO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE DARRYING ON A BUS TO CALI DURING THE DISTURBANCES. FARC GUERRILLAS RAIDED A TOWN IN META DEPARTMENT THE MORNING OF MARCH 7, IN A PRE-DAWN ATTACK ON THE TOWN OF VISTA HERMOSA, A FARC FORCE ESTIMATED AT UP TO 150 ARMED GUERRILLAS FIRST ATTACKED A POLICE POST, KILLING ONE POLICEMAN AND WOUNDING TWO OTHERS. THEY THEN LOOTED STORES AND THE LOCAL AGRARIAN BANK. A DIFFERENT FARC FRONT, OPERATING IN THE CIMITARRA REGION, EXECUTED TWO PEASANTS THEY ACCUSED OF COOPERATING WITH THE AUTHORITIES, RISING TO ELEVEN THE

NUMBER OF PEASANTS KILLED BY THE FARC IN CIMITARRA THIS YEAR. IN BOGOTA, THE YOUNG DAUGHTER OF A WEALTHY CATTLEMAN WAS KIDNAPPED FROM HER HOME, APPARENTLY BY PROFESSIONAL CRIMINALS.

7. AIR FORCE TO INTERCEPT AIRCRAFT VIOLATING COLOMBIAN AIR SPACE. THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS DEPARTMENT IS PREPARING AN OFFICIAL "NOTAM" WARNING THAT THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE WILL INTERCEPT PLANES MAKING UNAUTHORIZED ENTRIES INTO COLOMBIAN AIR SPACE, AND THAT IF THE INTRUDING PLANES DO NOT RESPOND TO INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SIGNALS, THE AIR FORCE WILL USE WEAPONS AGAINST THEM. EFFECTIVE EXECUTION OF THIS POLICY WOULD HAVE A DETERRENT EFFECT ON THE USE OF AIRCRAFT OPERATING FROM CLANDESTINE STRIPS IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. ASENSIO

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## Message Attributes

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